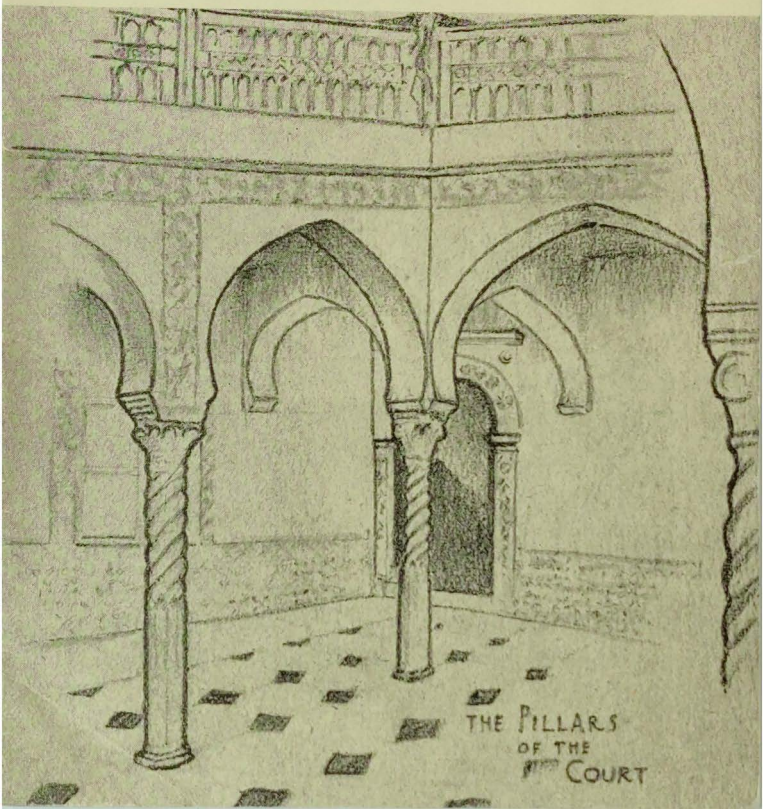


Vibrations.

I. Lilius Trotter.



THE PILLARS
OF THE
COURT

VIBRATIONS.

A BANG and a crash, and a cloud of dust that when it cleared showed a picture of ruin. One of the pillars that support the gallery of our old Arab house had fallen down into the court and lay shattered on the pavement, carrying with it a block of masonry and a shower of bricks and blue and white tiles from the arch above it.

Down below, alongside of us, a native baker had installed himself six or seven years ago. This means that for hours every night two men had swung on the huge sec-saw which in some mysterious way kneads their bread, and every blow backwards and forwards had vibrated through our house, and now at last the result was seen in the shattering of masonry that had looked as if it would last as long as the world.

The town architect came, confirmed this as the probable cause of the collapse, and obliged the baker to do his kneading after another fashion!

But God had meanwhile given an object lesson concerning a truth which had glimmered out before in thinking of the strange power of vibrations—once more “the invisible things being understood by the things that are made.”

For there is a vibrating power going on down in the darkness and dust of this world that can make itself visible in starting results in the upper air and sunlight of the invisible world, “mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.” Each prayer-beat down here vibrates up to the very throne of God, and does its work through that throne on the principalities and powers around us, just as each one of the repeated throbs from below told on the structure of our house, though it was only the last one that produced the

visible effect. We can never tell which prayer will liberate the answer, but we *can* tell that each one will do its work : we know that “ if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us, and if we know that He hear us we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.”

There are two parables in St. Luke's Gospel that translate this matter of the power of vibrations in the prayer world out of the region of theory into that of revealed truth : the parable of the three loaves in Chapter 11, and that of the widow and her adversary in Chapter 18. It is not a question in either of them, it seems, of prayer for the personal needs of our souls ; for these we do not need to come again and again to wring an unwilling answer out of our Father, but to search in His Word till He gives a promise which meets our case and then to step out on it in the bare faith which believes that it receives.

But the question of prayer becomes more complicated when it concerns others—complicated

not only by the independence of their individuality and their personal wills, but by the action of the principalities and powers of the rulers of the world of darkness. We have a glimpse of this in Dan. 10. The answer was sent out from God's presence "from the day that he set his face," but it took three weeks to battle through the opposing hosts, and all that time God *needed*, in some mysterious way, the help of Daniel's fastings and prayers down in the darkness, to help fight through and reach him.

Compare the two parables. They rhyme as it were; there is much that is parallel, and yet we see the shade of difference. Both begin with helplessness—midnight in the first, a shut door, a far-off voice that only answers "not now." Loneliness in the second—a widow with no one to take her part, no brother or son to stand for her. And yet in each case "because of importunity" they will not recognise defeat and they both fight through all odds to victory.

But the aim is different in the two. The first is the cry for supply for the individual souls who come to us in their journey through life, the second is the battle that we learn further on, against the principalities and powers in heavenly places, headed by "our adversary the devil." In both there is the stepping down into the place of helplessness first, the Peniel of the crippled Jacob, where power with God and with man is to be found.

Have you ever watched trollies working on a moorside between the quarries above and the road below? How are the empty trucks sent flying up, against all laws of gravitation? it is by the full trucks doing down—*down* . . . "I have nothing to set before him." And not by our own power or holiness can we produce any supply. Our cupboard bare, all resources closed around us like the bread stalls in the deserted street—shut up to hope in God alone, that is the first condition. And the second is the impor-

tunity which holds on to the end, until the answer has come. A break of faithlessness gives the enemy time to regain his power and to seize again the ground we have gained, like the Amalekites prevailing when Moses let down his hand, "the hand upon the throne of God" (Ex. 17. 16 margin) and *through* that throne upon the powers of the enemy. With our hands placed there upon the place of power we learn the secret of prevailing. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

There is one keynote that, once struck, can move heaven and earth: its mighty vibrations ring up to the throne of God and thunder upon the gates of hell: "That in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow." When once the prayer-beats have struck that note of the Name of Jesus, it is only a matter of going on.

We see the power of "the King's name" in the story of Esther. It is when Haman has been

delivered to the gallows, and only the voice of Esther is heard, that the king's ring is given to Mordecai with the words: "Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the King's name, and seal it with the King's seal." (Est. viii. 8). And having the authority of that Name their prayer is the prayer of faith that *knows* it has the petition, and it was "written according to all that Mordecai commanded."

We cannot have the Spirit's commanding in prayer until we have before been living under His law in secret, as Esther in Chapter ii. 9. "The minding of the Spirit is life and peace"—what far-reaching life and peace for other souls as well as our own, none can tell.

Esther had had access to the King before on behalf of her people. She had surrendered her life and will, if only she might be an intercessor. But now power was given into her hand against the power of the enemy. She was no longer as the friend asking at midnight for the bread of

life, she was armed with the authority that was "above" the might that opposed her; she had hold, no longer of the King's sceptre, but of the King's seal.

Oh! this is what we need! Only dim glimmerings come as yet of what it means to wield the power of the Name of Jesus against the world-rulers who lie *behind* the needs of those around us.

The story of Esther is the story of the widow and her adversary shadowed forth in advance, and also gives us another aspect of the parallel parable of the friend coming at midnight for the three loaves. Three, the number of divine perfection—loaves, the symbol of life, heavenly life to be had for the asking for the needy souls around us: "He shall ask and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." And Esther asks life, life for her people in their midnight, when there was no resource but in God; and this life was gained by the avenging of

the adversary who had stood up against her. In helplessness, in loneliness, against all odds, she had taken up the burden and fought the matter out and through to victory.

In our ignorance and our impotence are we not just like Esther and the widow—as unequal a match as they for the cunning and the cruelty of the adversary, shut up as they were to seek the power of a Stronger than he to come down on him? Oh, the helplessness of us! Not only helpless in providing for the needs of those who come up to us in their journey through life, but helpless in the battle against the principalities and powers in heavenly places. The one leads on to the other. More and more we see that at the back of the whole question of blessing coming on the souls for whom we are caring, lies this unseen triumph to be gained over the hosts of our adversary the devil. In work for God, especially perhaps in work abroad, we see the tide of victory nearing till it is almost upon us, and then

it is swept back again till it seems as distant as ever. One of the principalities of the powers of evil has been sent out by their great chief to defend the weakening place in his battle array, and we have been ignorant of his devices and we have not prayed *through*. We have not realised that the last moment before victory is *the* critical moment of the whole—the one of all others certain to be pounced on by the devil for a counter-blow.

With these overwhelming powers against us, the overwhelming needs around us, our own entire helplessness, only one little life on earth, ebbing so quickly—it is essential that if there is a secret of power to be had we *must* learn it.

How did victory come to Esther? It was not that the power given into the hands of the adversary was withdrawn; it was his for the time by an unchangeable decree, even as it is now. But down against that power was brought the might of the King's authority, brought to bear on the

side of the oppressed, so that "in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them . . . it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them." It is so still. God does not as yet withdraw the mysterious powers given to the prince of this world, but He can and will send out on our side a "power above all the power of the enemy," and that comes to the same thing, as we see in Esther's story. In her heart, in the heart of the widow, was the same thought: An answer is to be had, and I must have it; and so on they went in the absolute simplicity of this one idea till the answer came, the "vibrations" took effect at last, the last barrier was broken through, and victory was won.

It is a solemn thing to stand on the threshold of a century that will almost without a doubt, so far as we can discern the signs of the time, set Him on the chariot of His willing people. Can we not begin to see the working of the Spirit in

the cry that is going up from the hearts of so many of us to learn the secret of a life of prayer? Is He not preparing us to join in the last cry of the Bride, "Come, Lord Jesus"—the cry that will not only "vibrate" but will rend the heavens and destroy the power of "the last enemy"?

I. L. TROTTER.

(From a rough MS. unrevised by the author.)

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